

LIFE AND TRAINING IN AMERICAN CAMPS

camps under the selective draft law formed the nucleus of the National Army which was organized at that time.

Camp Jackson, on September 5, 1917, when the first men drafted arrived there, was quite different in appearance from what it was a few months later. We, like all new men upon first reaching a military training camp, knew little about what awaited us. The camp was located on a ridge of thickly wooded sand hills. Just enough trees and stumps had been removed to provide for the construction of the large wooden barracks. These training camps were built under government emergency orders, and the contractors left all the finishing touches, and much of the manual labor to the Rookies who were to be trained in them, just as if such work was necessarily a part of their military training.

Those of us who came into camp during those first weeks spent almost as much time cutting trees, digging stumps, working roads and doing "landscape gardening" as in the study and practice of things purely military. We were naturally very slow in understanding what digging stumps and "policing up" cigarette "ducks" and match sticks had to do with winning the war. But in the emergency, we obeyed orders out of loyalty to our government and to humanity, as if by instinct, and the work was done regardless of how menial or difficult. If one of us dared